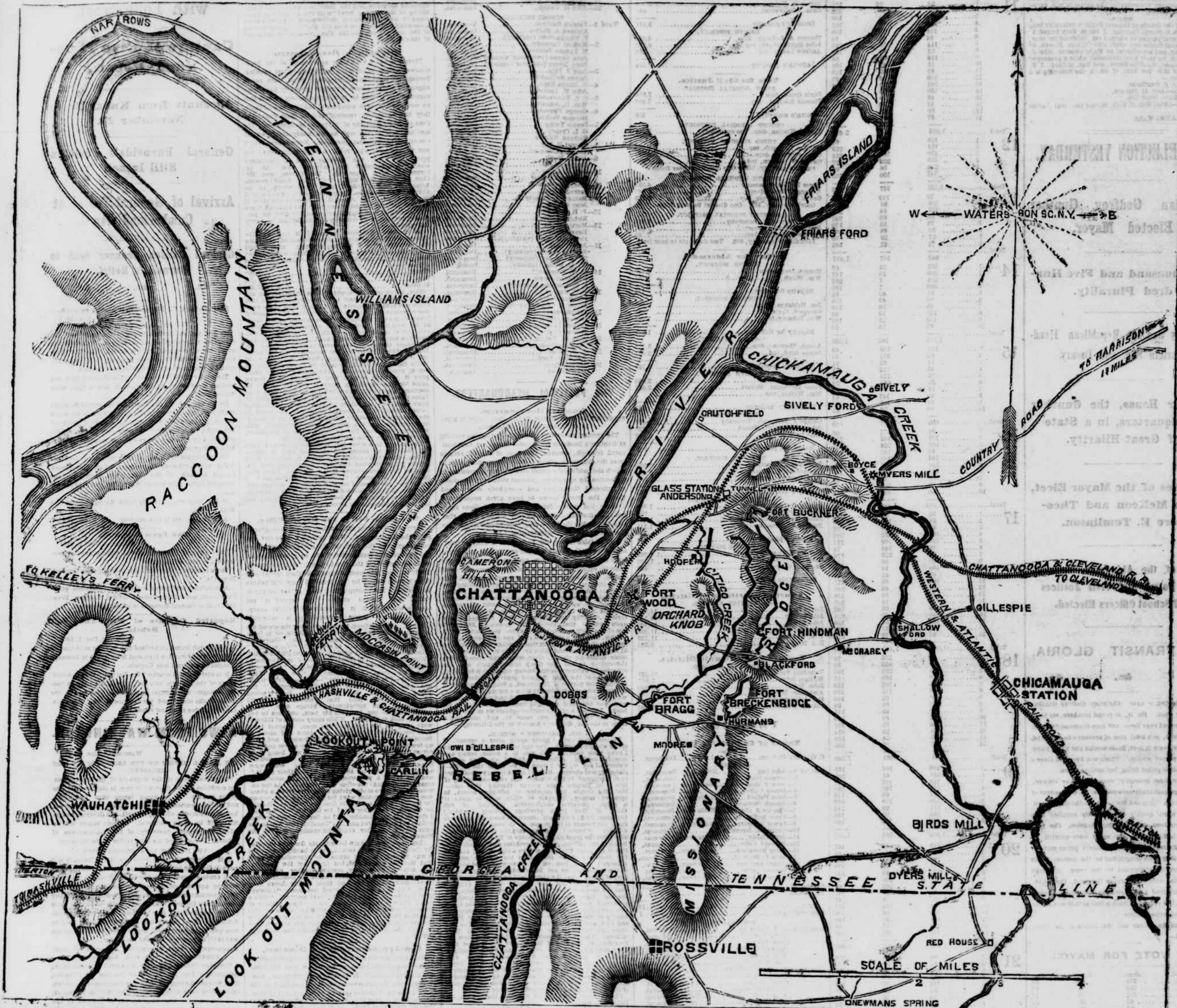


THE BATTLE FIELD AT CHATTANOOGA.

Topographical View of the Field where Grant Whipped Bragg,
November 25, 26 and 27, 1863.



GRANT'S VICTORIES.

The Battles of Lookout Mountain and Tunnel Hill and the Assault of Mission Ridge.

Our Special Description of These Splendid Affairs.

The Details of General Grant's Brilliant Operations.

The Battle of Lookout Mountain.

Fighting Joe's Magnificent Assault on That Stronghold.

"HOOKER FIGHTS FOR KEEPS."

THE BATTLE OF TUNNEL HILL.

Splendid Fighting of Sherman and His Corps.

The Assault of Mission Ridge.

The Way Grant Went Up That Hill.

Gallant Gordon Granger and Plucky Palmer Carry the Ridge.

THE CASUALTIES.

Mr. Wm. F. O. Sparks' Description. CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. Nov. 26, 1863.

If it be the confirmation of victory to sleep in the beds of the conquered, then are we victorious. If to have utterly broken and routed the enemy and driven him in disgraceful rout from a position whose natural strength cannot be over-estimated, with heavy loss to him and but little loss to us, is to have won a victory, then I may repeat the words of my first telegram, "We are completely victorious." Two nights ago the enemy's fire burned brightly on Mission Ridge and Lookout Mountain. Last night, at dusk, the Union camp fires made the ridge one great glow worm, and crimsoned the sky above till the great, full moon, which had risen just as the day and battle were waning and ended, looked pale but smilingly. The situation may create a smile, but there was more than one on the ridge yesterday afternoon who, as they saw the enemy flying and the moon rising, thought of the "sun of Austrelia." I remember watching Grant, as he rode along the ridge, with head uncovered, receiving the plaudits of his men, and I wondered if he did not think of the same incident.

THE PLAN OF OPERATIONS.

Although the admirably conducted and highly successful operations of General Hooker, in conjunction with General W. F. Smith ("Fido") a month ago, brought the rebels to the point of retreat, the plan of operations was not yet complete.

the humiliation of seeing its army evacuating the important position of Chattanooga, the increased facilities of transportation afforded by that success were not sufficient to supply and provision an army reinforced to the extent it was deemed necessary to strengthen the Army of the Cumberland. The railroad to Chattanooga became an imperative and immediate necessity, and with this as the primary object to be attained, General Grant devised a plan to raise the siege of the place and get possession of all-important Lookout Mountain. This plan was submitted to his general officers by General Grant, and finally adopted. On last Friday I had an opportunity of seeing a copy of General Grant's letter to General Thomas, detailing this plan. Now that it has been carried out to a highly successful issue, I feel at liberty to use the substance of the letter of General Grant, which has reference to the execution of the plan. Not only was the principal object to be attained a tempting reward for the operations intended, but an examination of the enemy's lines showed very plainly that he had deliberately exposed himself to great danger. His exterior line upon Mission Ridge was some thing near seven miles in extent, while his inner line of rifle pits and similar defenses running through the valleys was not less than five miles long. There was upon the line two points of importance to him: the first, Tunnel Hill, being the key to his position and Lookout Mountain—a position important to Bragg as a barrier to the purposes of Grant. It was supposed the enemy would defend Tunnel Hill with vigor. Lookout could be held by a small force. Gen. Grant held that, to attack his flank vigorously, in order to force him to keep his line lengthened, and thus weakened, would afford a favorable opportunity to test the strength of the center. It was therefore decided that General Sherman, with three divisions of his own army, and General Davis, of Palmer's corps, should move north of the river, to a point opposite the mouth of the Chickamauga, and at an early hour on the following morning throw a pontoon bridge across the Tennessee, and, under cover of General Brannan's artillery, cross and carry the heights of Mission Ridge as far as, at Tunnel Hill. On the left rebel flank, Gen. Hooker was to operate with General Davis, and two brigades of Gen. Stanley's division, his primary object being to hold the rebels there, but authorized, in case of an opportunity presenting itself, to take possession of Lookout Mountain. In the center, Gen. Thomas was ordered to hold Granger and Palmer's corps well in hand, to await an opportunity to strike at the center, whenever in the opinion of Gen. Grant (the auspicious moment presented itself). Gen. O. O. Howard's corps was to be moved to the north side of the river, so as to aid either Sherman or the center. But subsequently, at the suggestion of Gen. Thomas, Howard was crossed into Chattanooga, and held as a movable column in reserve. Such was the general plan of operations. Subject, of course, to such modifications as the movements of the enemy might necessitate. But it will be seen that the enemy had no choice of movements, but forced to assume the defensive, was completely at the mercy of General Grant's strategy.

ments. Never have operations in war better or more fully shown the vast advantages of the offensive. The battles of Chattanooga have been the only ones ever fought by this army on purely offensive principles, and I have thought since these battles that the secret of Grant's success may be discovered in the fact that he has always taken the offensive. I have heard men call him "the lucky Grant," and the newspapers speak of his good fortune. I tell you it is not luck, it is not good fortune. It is "Le génie de la guerre." He does not depend upon circumstance or good fortune, but controls both. One more forcibly and graphically the vast advantages of offensive warfare than all the maxims of Napoleon or Jomini can.

GENERAL WOOD'S RECONNOISSANCE.

Reports had come in during the morning of Monday that the enemy were evacuating the ridge in our front. On examination it was found that they were engaged in some kind of movement, and about noon General Thomas determined upon a reconnaissance to learn the meaning of his right, it being a matter of considerable interest, in view of Sherman's movements, to know how strongly Bragg was posted on the ridge about the tunnel. General Wood's division was selected to make the reconnaissance, and at one o'clock he had moved his three brigades into line in an open field east of the city, and immediately under the siege guns of Fort Wood. General Howard's corps having crossed the river from Lookout valley, deployed into line as a reserve, while General Sheridan, of Granger's corps, and the troops of the Fourteenth corps, General Palmer, were drawn up in line in case of a necessity arising for them. General Palmer also showed himself threateningly down the valley of Chattanooga creek, making his advance well beyond the house. Wood's route, as chosen, was to be to the left of the road to Blackford's house, on Mission Ridge, but the force headed for two prominent hills a little to the north of the road, and the right hardly rested on the Blackford road when the day was over.

the enemy as to his actual movements had the delay not compelled the withdrawal of that feinting column for want of rations, at an early day. It is suspected that the enemy had learned of the actual plan of operations, for he had moved somewhat to his right.

GENERAL WOOD MOVES FORWARD.

I have before mentioned two prominent peaks or hills in Wood's front. These are exactly one mile from Fort Wood, and lie west of Chicko creek, a little stream running between this small ridge and Mission Ridge. The principal of these peaks is called by the citizens "Orchard Knob," and the rebels had used it as a redoubt in their outer line. The approach to it was down and across an open slope from Fort Wood, and across this plan at half-past one P. M. Willich's and Hazen's brigades were in the front line, General Sam. Wood's brigade forming the reserve. At the moment Wood began to move, General Granger ordered the siege guns in Fort Wood to open on the enemy's first position, and immediately the black monitors began to belabor a bold challenge to the enemy's force, as they in the valley below and towards us. Wood moved forward in admirable style, his skirmishers driving in the strong picket line of the enemy with ease. Through the open field the line moved unwaveringly, and not with undue haste, as if seeking to gain the cover of the woods in their front, but in the style of veterans proud of their leader, and knowing that from the ramparts of Fort Wood they were watched by General Grant, Thomas, Granger and Howard, each seemed to feel that he was part of a scene which, even in this warlike age, has been seldom witnessed. There was no straggling. There were none who seemed so poor and spiritless as to straggle in the presence of men who had led at Vicksburg and Chickamauga, or of troops that had stood at Gettysburg. So when they disappeared in the woods at the foot of the hill and their position became revealed only by the smoke of battle, which rose above the tree tops and drifted away toward Mission Ridge, a general buzz of admiration went up from the spectators in the fort, and extended to the more distinguished heroes of Vicksburg and Chickamauga. On entering the woods the advancing line became quite warmly engaged, and at a quarter of two o'clock a very brisk musketry fire enveloped the whole of Wood's front. The enemy was found posted behind rude but good rifle pits, and in strong forces. But though they got in upon Wood a heavy and quite destructive fire, it did not for a moment halt him. On reaching the foot of Orchard Knob he ordered a charge, and with a cheer the men went at it. The Fifteenth Ohio pushed up the Knob in admirable order, while the rest of Willich's and Hazen's brigades took the rifle pits, driving the enemy out in confusion and securing one hundred and fifty men and nine officers of an Alabama regiment. The Sixth Indiana, the Eighth and Twenty-fourth Ohio, Fifth Kentucky, Tenth Iowa and Twenty-first Ohio formed the front of Hazen's, which gallantly assaulted and carried the ridge to the right of Orchard Knob, driving the rebels from the pits on the summit.

Although now far advanced towards the enemy's line of works on the ridge, General Wood found his flanks entirely unassailed. He discovered the position taken to be a very strong one, easily held, in short cannot range of the enemy's camps along Chicko creek, and within reach of the heavy line established by them on the summit of Mission Ridge; and finding, after some time, that the enemy remained quiet, Wood reported the fact to General Granger, who, on orders from General Thomas, instructed Wood to trench himself, and at the same time sent word he would protect his flanks. This was all Wood asked. At Shiloh, Stone river and Chickamauga, he has proved that he could take care of his front.

In order to support Wood in his position, General Thomas ordered General Howard, with his two divisions, to move from his position as reserve behind Wood, and to an inner line on Chicko creek, closing his right well upon Wood's left, and retreating the left of the corps. He got into position without much fighting, other than some petty heavy skirmishing with a small force of rebels in a second line of rifle pits beyond Chicko creek. Approaching these pits in front, General Howard found their occupants prepared, and disposed to make a strong resistance. In order to avoid a bloody affair, General Granger sent General Beatty's brigade, of Wood's division, hitherto in reserve, through some woods to the right of the rebel works. Beatty succeeded splendidly in his movement. The enemy, finding himself flanked by Beatty, and at the same time heavily pressed by Howard, hastily fled to the stronger position at the foot of the mountain.

Simultaneously with Howard's movement General Sheridan's division—Granger's corps—was moved forward to support Wood's right, and went into position in echelon on the left without any fighting. The enemy finding that our men were intrenching their position on Orchard Knob, began about five o'clock a vigorous shooting of that point. Although this was kept up from three batteries until darkness had set in no damage was done. During the night the position taken by Wood and the forces which came up to support him, right and left, was materially strengthened by building rough rifle pits a few yards in front of those of the rebels which had been taken. Captain Bridges' battery was moved forward from Fort Wood and posted on Orchard Knob where it remained during the rest of the operations. There may have been other batteries on the front line at this time, but if so I did not see them. I may as well mention here that the heavy guns of Fort Wood, manned by the Twelfth Indiana battery, Capt. Dinwiddie, took part in the three days' operations, throwing heavy shells upon Mission Ridge with great accuracy.

General Palmer moved during the night a portion of his corps to the left of his position during the day, and stood ready at dawn to continue his demonstrations down Chattanooga valley, or to aid the left center under Granger, as he might be directed. He was not, however, ordered to do so.